

**Capital Region ETE Steering Committee Meeting  
Zoom Call February 16, 2021**

**Attendees List:**

1. Amanda Ahrens – Benefits Counselor, Legal Aid Society of NENY
2. Amanda Duff –
3. Brittni Gulotti - Public Affairs & Volunteer Coordinator Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood
4. Christine Wasik – Albany Medical Center
5. Claire Mone, NYSDOH, AIDS Institute, Office of Planning and Community Affairs
6. Diane DeGroat, Senior Attorney, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY
7. Geri Walsh, Employment Pathways, Albany Damien Center
8. Jeannie Haller, Ellis Medicine, Project Coordinator
9. John Hartigan, AIDS Institute, Bureau of Community Support Services
10. Kate Thorpe, AMC, SCCAYA
11. Kyla Loucks – Albany Medical Center
12. Lauren Quinn Albany Med Specialized Care Center
13. Lyndsi Wickert- Albany Damien Center, Employment Pathways
14. Meghan Thompson, Retention Adherence Specialist, Ellis Medicine
15. Melissa Carbone – Hudson Headwaters Health Network
16. Perry Junjulas – Executive Director & PWA, Albany Damien Center
17. Randy Viele – Alliance for Positive Health
18. Scott Daly – Peer Navigator, Ellis Medicine
19. Susan Johnson, PrEP Specialist, Whitney Young Health

**Call to Order** – Perry Junjulas welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

A motion to accept the minutes of January 19, 2021 was made by Kyla Louckes and seconded by Chris Wasik . Minutes accepted as submitted.

**Legislative Update** – All eyes on the budget, vacation next week for Legislators. AIDS Counsel Legislative Awareness day is this Friday 10a-11a. Please register, it will be a Town Hall type presentation.

15% being released from the 20% that was withheld but there is still a 5% withhold.

340B – Lots of movement. There may be a potential delay with this as the Dept of Health was supposed to notify the health plans this past Friday. We are hoping to have this carve out delayed for 3 years.

**Committee Updates**

**HAB Update – Chris Wasik**

- State of New York will have monthly committees to focus on COVID & Mental Health issues
- Next month meeting will be (2) ½ Day sessions

**Youth Committee – Lauren Quinn**

- 1 youth attended the recent meeting along with a few adults. Working on getting feedback from youth to see what they would like to see in the future. Next meeting is February 25, 2021. The youth they serve is any age up to 24 years old.

**HIV Testing – Chris Wasik & Kyla Loucks**

There has been a decrease in testing, numbers are down both locally and nationally. They are still doing on site testing, drive up testing and mailing at home kits. Kyla mentioned the website <https://nyaidslines.org/> . She also stated that

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people can The H-Line to ask questions about HIV or they can send a question by using fb messenger. They can receive answers to their questions and/or receive information on testing sites.

**AIDS Watch – Scott Daly**

Registration is now available for AIDS Watch 2021 will be March 22, 2021 – March 23, 2021. Same format as last year with virtual meetings and trainings.

**Agency Updates**

**Albany Damien Center – Geri Walsh & Lyndsi Wickert**

- FB LIVE events on Wednesdays 2p-3p on Albany Damien Center Facebook page
- If anyone needs assistance from Employment Pathways they can call 518-641-9195
- All of the previous FB LIVE videos can also be found on Facebook page

**Albany Med- Chris Wasik**

- Recruiting for Case Manager position
- Mental Health Specialist has been hired
- There is a process system wide for supporting letters for patients on the portal for vaccine eligibility

**Albany Med – Lauren Quinn**

- Increase of college students being tested
- Megan – New Nurse that will be starting
- Kate will step into HIV role
- Things are going well, hoping more patients will receive free rapid HIV testing each month

**Legal Aid Society – Diane DeGroat & Amanda Ahrens**

- Evictions can be scheduled but there is a hardship exception. Tenant would need to complete the hardship form & return to landlord & send it to court.
- Eviction cannot happen before May 1, 2021 although there are nuisance exceptions or safety hazard. If landlord is claiming safety hazard or nuisance the eviction can proceed.
- Legal Aid can help by talking thru circumstances and making sure the tenants are not submitting false documents.
- AIDS Institute is extending the Legal Program Services thru 9/30/2021
- Amanda added that she is working remotely and is using video conferencing to help with updated benefits. She can be reached at 518-689-6309

**Benefits Counseling – Claire Mone**

- Benefits Counseling Pilot Project – Will help those living with HIV/AIDS manage their government benefits while working or returning the work. Claire has sent the pamphlets out to everyone.

**Ellis Medicine, Meagan Thompson**

- Patients are being seen via TeleMed services and also in the office
- Patients recently have been refusing to come in for labs. Staff is reinforcing the sanitation procedures.
- Q1 Project – COVID Vaccine. Did well with flu shot. There have been a lot of questions & interests. Many are discouraged & frustrated with no appointments available. Over 70% of employees have been vaccinated.

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**Hudson Headwaters Health Network – Melissa Carbone**

- They are working with Skidmore’s Student Sexual Health Committee and offering a rapid HIV self-test program on campus this semester

**Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood – Brittni Gulotti**

- Still seeing patients
- Digital access is up and running, masks are worn as they are helping people access telehealth allowing them to use a device and hot spot
- Focusing on college student with the digital access
- Statewide Day of Action – March 9, 2021 – information can be found on <https://www.mobilize.us/ppesa/>
- National team working with Biden/Harris administration to get funding back

**Whitney Young Health Center, Sue Johnson**

- Next meeting is February 24, 2021 on Zoom, looking for people to join their committee. Please reach out to Sue, Kyla or Perry if you are interested in the PrEP Committee
- Outreach is down. They are concentrating on making sure Providers know about PrEP.

**New Business**

- COVID Vaccines – People with HIV are now eligible to be vaccinated. Albany County is allowing residents to pre-register for the vaccine at <https://alb.518c19.com/>
- AIDS Walk is cancelled this year

Meeting adjourned at 10:36am

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**ETE Capital Region Meetings are from 9 AM to 10:30 AM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues of each month**

Next ETE Meeting is Tuesday, March 16, 2021

**Contact information**

Kyla Loucks [loucksk1@amc.edu](mailto:loucksk1@amc.edu) 518-264-5839 (work phone) or 518-926-0515 (cell)

Perry Junjulas [PerryJ@AlbanyDamienCenter.org](mailto:PerryJ@AlbanyDamienCenter.org) 518-449-7119 x102 or 518-961-0071 (cell)

ETE Webpage at <http://www.albanydamiencenter.org/capital-region-ete.html>